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developments could address several transportation concerns raised in the Master Plan process.

Action TC-8 Either through MAGIC or the development of a regional transportation board comprised of officials from surrounding towns, work in coordination with surrounding towns to address immediate regional transportation issues..

Improvements for Pedestrians and Bicyclists

Introduction

Encouraging the use of alternative means to get around Acton is one strategy for reducing automobile trips, congestion, and parking shortages. Alternatives to the automobile also increase mobility for teens and non-driving seniors and promote a closer sense of community.

Described below are recommended actions for pedestrian and bicyclist circulation improvements. Specific improvements are grouped primarily by geographic "villages" where possible and reflect many goals and requests voiced by members of the public in 1990 and 1997. Many of the following recommendations involve the use or modification of public rights-of-way and would be undertaken by the Town. However, several recommendations could be addressed by the private sector and/or financed with state and federal funding. Maximizing use of private and state/federal funds to realize these recommendations should be an overarching goal for implementation.

Acton already has a detailed Sidewalk Capital Plan. The following streets have been identified in the Capital Plan for sidewalk improvements:

- Central Street, Arlington Street to Elm Street
- Charter, #76 to #80
- High Street, Main Street to Audubon Hill
- School Street, Sandy Drive to Maddy Lane
- Concord Road, Minot Avenue to Nagog Hill Road
- Lawsbrook Road/School Street, Hosmer Street to Concord Town Line
- Massachusetts Avenue, Arlington Street to Wright terrace
- Central Street, Willow Street to Windsor Avenue
- Main Street, Post Office Square to Great Road
- Prospect Street, Main Street to Central Street
- Newtown Road, Simon Williard Road to Main Street
- Stow Street, Maple Street to Jones Field
- Summer Street, #122 to Autumn Lane
- Willow Street, Central Street to Marian Road
- Arlington Street, Massachusetts Avenue to Summer Street
- Brook Street, Main Street to Great Road
- Main Street, Great Road to Northbriar Road
- Martin street, Central Street to Jones Field

The costs for these improvements is estimated to be \$1,674,300 in 1998 dollars. The cost of providing additional sidewalks (those not already included in the Sidewalk Capital

Plan) is estimated to be \$960,000 to \$1,872,000,⁷² depending on whether one or two sides of the streets will have sidewalks. Granite curbs for sidewalks is estimated to be an additional \$704,000 for one side of the street or \$1,372,800 for both sides of the street.⁷³

South Acton

Improving connectivity between residential areas and South Acton Village and the MBTA commuter rail will help increase walking and bicycling to these areas. Sidewalks should be built on High Street, Central Street past Martin Street, River Street, Piper Street, and Prospect Street. Second priority sidewalks are Martin Street, Maple Street, Stow Street, and Liberty Street.

Funding should be designated to participate in the design and construction of the Assabet River Rail Trail, a proposed 12-mile multi-use trail from Marlborough to the South Acton commuter rail station, to ensure that it is built expeditiously. This trail, in addition to being a significant recreational asset, would improve bicycle access to the commuter rail station and ease parking shortages. The estimated cost for the creation of the Assabet River Trail is \$250,000 per mile.

Action TC-9 Build sidewalks leading to South Acton Village and commuter rail station.

Action TC-10 Improve facilities for bicyclists

Action TC-11 Provide funding and support for Assabet River Rail-Trail

East Acton

Pedestrian movement in East Acton is hampered by steady traffic, inadequate sidewalks, and excessive curb cuts. A pedestrian walk as continuous as possible should be built to create a system that is attractive, safe, and comprehensible approach to both pedestrian and motorist. Consolidating curb cuts to define the pedestrian way should be pursued. The elimination of curb cuts is estimated to be \$900 per curb cut.

Filling missing segments of sidewalk is essential to making a pedestrian system in East Acton Village. Streets leading to Great Road as well as Great Road should have sidewalks.

Action TC-12 Reduce curb cuts on Great Road

Action TC-13 Construct sidewalks on Great Road and Wetherbee Street

West Acton

Providing continuous sidewalks on streets leading to and within West Acton Village should be a high priority. Key streets are: south side of Arlington Street between Spruce Street and Central Street; both sides of Spruce Street; and north side of Massachusetts

⁷² Based on an estimate of \$30.00 per linear foot

⁷³ Based on an estimate of \$22.00 per linear foot

Avenue from Central Street to Wright Terrace. Reducing and consolidating curb cuts (\$900 each) within the village district will improve the pedestrian environment.

Areas with many children, such as the schools and playgrounds, should be connected by an internal multi-use path running between Elm Street and Arlington Street. This paved path would also help connect the neighborhood north of West Acton Village to the village district.

A multi-use path connecting Massachusetts Avenue to Arlington Street would shorten the distance between the playground and the Douglas School and the residential areas to the east, making walking and bicycling more viable. It is estimated that this path will cost \$100,000 per half mile to construct.

Provision of pedestrian amenities, such as neckdowns to reduce crossing distance, and crosswalks with special colors and textures within the village district helps slow traffic by making pedestrian facilities more prominent. This will create a better balance between pedestrians and motorists within the village district. Neckdowns cost about \$1,700 each and enhanced crosswalks about \$4,800 each.

Action TC-14 Construct sidewalks on West Acton Village-area streets.

Action TC-15 Create pedestrian and bicycle connections between activity centers.

Action TC-16 Slow Massachusetts Avenue traffic by installing pedestrian amenities.

North Acton

The North Acton Recreation Area is scheduled to open in 1999. This multi-use community park is expected to generate significant pedestrian and bicycle traffic from surrounding neighborhoods, as well as vehicular traffic from throughout the town.

Action TC-17 Develop sidewalks and bikeways to connect NARA with surrounding neighborhoods.

Townwide

Limited facilities for pedestrians and cyclists result in poor connections within and between activity centers such as Kelley's Corner or other village centers, and outlying residential areas. Enhanced linkages play a role in reducing auto-dependency in Acton.

A study of additional connections for bicycles and pedestrians to facilitate access to activity centers should be conducted to determine issues and to rank priority corridors. This study would identify barriers to access that may be easy to overcome.

Connecting the villages of South Acton and West Acton by means other than the automobile could be accomplished by working with the MBTA to construct a rail-with-trail along, but separated from, the commuter rail tracks (Fitchburg line). The trail would also connect to West Concord and would provide safe, off-road commuting and recreational opportunities. This trail, ranked a high priority by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council because of the excellent potential connections between villages, should be studied in detail to determine feasibility and costs.

Consideration should be given to constructing an off-road bicycle path or bicycle lanes along Route 27 if the road is reconstructed. The Town should study the issues surrounding widening the paved area for bicycles.

A bicycle path in North Acton to provide access to conservation areas and the NARA should be studied to determine the feasibility and environmental issues.

The Metropolitan Area Planning Council has identified the provision of bicycle lanes on Route 111 as a high priority. These lanes would aid cyclists headed to numerous schools on Route 111, and would link Kelley's Corner and West Acton. Creation of these bike lanes should be a high priority. The estimated cost for this project is \$4,700 per mile of bike lane.

Signage and pavement markings designed for bicycle traffic may encourage more bicyclists. Bicycle signage on key local connector street should be installed following a detailed study of bicycle-use patterns. "Share the Road [with bicycles]" warning signage should be installed on roads that lead to activity centers, are used by bicyclists, and do not have special provisions (extra width or marked bike lanes) for bicyclists. For example, Hayward Road, Piper Road, and Central Street may be candidates for "Share the Road" signage. This costs about \$25 per sign.

On state highway, the Town should work with MHD to determine where "Share the Road" signage may be installed by MHD.

Creating an image that an area is bicycle-friendly is important to encouraging more bicyclists, and highly visible bicycle racks help create that image. The zoning bylaw should be amended to require provision of bicycle parking in proportion to automobile parking and racks in prominent locations. Bicycle racks should be installed in villages, at public buildings, and at recreation areas. Village district bicycle racks should be small enough (such as an "inverted U" or Bike Link-type rack) to be installed on sidewalks at key locations. Group parking of bicycles should be provided at schools, large shopping areas, and recreation areas. Bicycle racks generally cost \$240 for a rack accommodating two bicycles.

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| <i>Action TC-18</i> | Continue to develop a program to address missing pedestrian and bicycle linkages and limited facilities within activity centers and neighborhoods. |
| <i>Action TC-19</i> | Comprehensive study of additional potential pedestrian and bicycle linkages. |
| <i>Action TC-20</i> | Pursue a Rail-with-Trail along Fitchburg line right-of-way. |
| <i>Action TC-21</i> | Study bicycle accommodation along Route 27. |
| <i>Action TC-22</i> | Study bicycle path in North Acton. |
| <i>Action TC-23</i> | Pursue creation of bicycle lanes along Route 111. |
| <i>Action TC-24</i> | Enhance bicycle visibility through appropriate signage and pavement markings. |

- Action TC-25* Amend zoning By-Law to require provision of bicycle racks in proportion to off-street parking spaces as close to the store as possible. Consider how to incorporate the stroller storage areas into these facilities.
- Action TC-26* Provide public bicycle parking facilities in village areas, at all public buildings, and at all recreation areas.